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ABSTRACT

Rural communities in Papua New Guinea (PNG) have been having problems accessing much needed information, while traditional bodies of knowledge are slowly disappearing as the old generation passes on. This paper argues that the school library is a possible agent to spread information. In addition to providing information to school children and teachers, schools can also be a medium to spread information to rural communities. However, schools without a library are a problem in PNG and will continue to be so unless initiatives are taken to allow for expansion of this service to community and high schools in the country. Learning occurs not only in classrooms, but also as students are encouraged to read and expand their knowledge. Within the Wantoat district in PNG there are 13 community schools, and the plan is to have a network of library service to all community schools in the district in the future. The Leron-Wantoat case study discussed in this paper outlines plans for a school library network in the district. The paper discusses what has been done at the planning stages. A further review will be needed after the project has been implemented and results of actions observed during the operations of the library network. It is also meant as an advisory paper for those who may be interested in doing similar projects for their own areas. (Author/MES)

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Local needs; global help: soliciting funds for a library in an isolated community in Papua New Guinea

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Abstract:

Rural communities in Papua New Guinea (hereafter PNG) have been having problems accessing much needed information, while traditional bodies of knowledge are slowly disappearing as the old generation passes on. A possible agent to spread information in a school library as this paper argues. Schools are best located in rural areas and aside from providing information to school children and teachers it can also be used as a medium to spread information to rural communities.

However, Schools without a library are a problem in PNG and will continue to be so unless initiatives are taken to allow for expansion of this service to Community and High Schools in the country. Learning not only occurs in classrooms, but students must be encouraged to read and expand their knowledge. Within Wantoat there are thirteen community schools and that the plan is to have a network of library service to all community schools in the District in future.

The Leron- Wantoat case study discussed in this paper outlines plans for school library network in the district. It discusses what has been done at the planning stages and a further review will be needed after the project has been implemented and results of actions observed during the operations of the library network. It is also meant as an advisory paper for those who may be interested in doing similar projects for their own areas

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Introduction.

Library services in PNG were introduced during the colonial era and after political independence, it has continued to expand to the present day. The development and expansion of these services is often hampered by numerous factors as experienced in many developing countries. There is often lack of government support and that as a result libraries in particular in schools have been neglected and or no existent. This paper discusses an innovative strategy that I have tried in the last few years trying to develop a library service to serve thirteen (13) community (Primary) Schools in my own District of the country. This project started as a result of request from the School Board of Management and teachers of the school.

While there is lack of support and government support there are other means of gaining support and the people need to take lead and initiatives instead of waiting for government support. This is an example of community involvement and initiative. At the request of teachers and parents I drew up a proposal for a school library service and submitted to donor agencies; in particular foreign embassies in the country. This paper outlines the issues and summaries what happened during the years 2000 to this year.

Spreading information to rural communities in PNG has been neglected, while traditional knowledge of communities is disintegrating at a faster rate. Although, this paper focuses on a school library network, it was also felt that the library becomes part of the information center for the community.

A major concern is lost of oral traditions of the people and thus, a need for the recording and preservation of the traditional indigenous knowledge. As the title may show this paper is not only concerned with a `school library' but rather a `Community Resource Center'. It is envisaged that aside from providing school library books, an information resource center will be created as well. Any written or recorded documents about the District would be deposited here, as a historical collection for the District. Future research and documentation programs about the district will also be deposited in the main library in the school at the District headquarters.

There are community schools in PNG that operate without a library at all. This applies to both rural and urban Community and High School Schools. The problem had been lack of support for the schools to have such facilities in the past. Unfortunately the trend continues today. Alternative means and ways have to be found to develop and provide information to the schools and the rural communities.

Project proposals and submissions can take initiatives and may or may not be funded at all. There have been continuous project proposals that have been knocked back by government for so long. Very often the excuse is there is no money. In this case local initiatives has been the driving force behind this school library project. I was approached by parents and headmaster of Wantoat Community School to help set up a school library. Being a former student of the school I was obliged to render my expertise as an adviser to this project.

1. Wantoat District.

The Wantoat District lies in rugged Finnistere and Saruwaged mountain ranges along the border of Madang and Morobe Provinces. (Refer to map) It constitutes Wantoat, Awara, Irumu and Bungam Census Divisions. Awara, Irumu and Bungam Census divisions are far from central Wantoat valley where the headquarters was set up.

The Wantoat population as at 1980 Census was 35,000 with 100 villages in Awara, Irumu and Bungam Census Divisions. Economic activity is rather slow as coffee is the only cash earner. The

rugged countryside makes road conditions difficult for people to transport their produce to fresh food markets in Lae. There are small trade stores and fresh food markets in Wantoat and along the road, but because of difficult terrain, it is impossible to start a viable business venture in Wantoat.

In 1918 Rev. Karl Holzknecht established the first Lutheran mission station at Kaiapit on the Markham Valley. The first European, however, to reach Wantoat was in 1927 from Kabwum with a group of local evangelists[1]. Initially there were evangelists from Kabwum left at main villages of Bumbum, Matap and Mupiapun.

The work and expansion of colonial administration came much later. Administrative patrols were carried out from Lae. In 1936 L.G. Vial[2] went on a patrol to take census and bring about colonial law and order. He was the first patrol officer to issue villages books and appoint *tultuls* and *luluais* in Wantoat. Unfortunately for the colonial administration, in October the same year, Suenda villagers wounded patrol officer Tom Hough. It took the carriers two days to carry Hough over the hills to Kaiapit and then flown to Salamaua and died later at Salamaua Hospital[3].

During the war year (1942-1945) mission and colonial activity was suspended, as foreign workers left due to the war. According to documents available Wantoat was heavily used by allied troops chasing Japanese who used this route from Kaiapit to Saidor or vice versa during the war.[4]

In 1947 Kaiapit District Headquarters was re-established, as an administrative post. It paved the way for patrols into the interior of Kaiapit District, which included Markham headwaters, Yaros, Awara, Irumu and Wantoat. Two years later in 1949 James Sinclair[5] patrolled into Wantoat with instructions to set up a patrol post and to `capture' culprits of a pay back murder in Numbugu village in Ufim Census Division, Markham Headwaters[6]. Sinclair was also instructed to extend the airstrip built earlier by a Chinese businessman to grow vegetables and sell in Lae markets. During the patrol Sinclair witnessed displeasure of Jabem and Kate schools. The *Luluai* of Gwambongwak village wanted the children to learn English instead of mission schools, which often taught their children `Bible stories'. Accordingly, James Sinclair concluded that this was `the cargo cultic' expectation of English language, which was widespread in the District.

2. Mission schools.

Wherever, the Lutheran mission went they started off with a school. The schools were to teach local people to read and write, and then translate the Bible and to spread the new religion. The introduction of mission schools led to a classroom-learning environment for the first time in Wantoat. This began a new system of learning, which later led to a structured and graded system of education. The mission schools used Kate and Jabem languages as mediums of instruction,

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[1] Wagner, Herwig and Hermann Reiner (eds.) 1986. The Lutheran Church in Papua New Guinea: The First hundred years, 1886-1986. Adelaide: Lutheran Publishing House.

[2] See for instance two articles he wrote on the information he collected during his patrol in Wantoat. The Dangagamun ceremony of the Wantoat *Oceania* 7: 341-345 and The Dam builders of New Guinea. *Walkabout* 5(1): 39-43.

[3] Sketchy reports of wounding of Hough appear in *Pacific Islands Monthly*. June 1989 page 54, January 1937 page 31, January 1937 page 52, February 1937 page 52 and February 1037 page 28. There is a need for research into this, as a villager perspective is needed as well.

[4] The Allied Geographical information published during the war years reveal the route that the troops took. Oral information often relates to Wantoat airstrip being used as a drop off point by the troops. There is also evidence of Japanese being killed by villagers in mountain range between Yupno and Kubung in Wantoat.

[5] Sinclair, James 1981. Kiap: Australia's Patrol Officers in New Guinea. Sydney: Pacific Publications.

[6] For details of this incident read; Woodward, Mary. 1977. Murder in the mountains: the story of an epic patrol to the Ufim River area, Markham Headwaters. *Journal of the Morobe District Historical Society* 4 (3): 33-46.

which depended, on which side of Wantoat River a village was located. Those to the West used Jabem and the East used Kate language.

Despite language problems church workers did their best to educate local people to read and translate the Bible. It was an education for a purpose; they were not to advance any further after three or four years, but to work for the church. Those who passed in Village Bible Schools were sent either to Finschhafen District Bible School for Kate speakers and Mainyanda District Bible School, near Bulolo for Jabem speakers. At these schools they were trained to work for church either as evangelists and or health workers.

When English was used as a medium of instruction, Bumayong Lutheran High School, Balob Teachers College and Martin Luther Seminary were started. This was to allow for Lutheran mission to train local people to work for the church using English. These schools allowed for mission educated children to be trained using English as a medium of instruction. Eventually the Lutheran church run schools and other church run schools were amalgamated into the national education system before political independence in 1972.

Much of colonial and administration expansion started after the war. With the arrival of patrol officer in 1955, health and education services were expanded. The Lutheran missionary Guenther Herrlinger was posted to new Kongaim mission station in 1956. The colonial administration 'English School' was also established the same year.

3. Colonial education system.

The colonial administration schools were known as Primary 'T' Schools. Although, it was requested in 1949 as discussed above, it was not set up until 1956. With Kate and Jabem Village Bible Schools slowly loosing interest, there was pressure for colonial administration to set up 'English schools'. Not many students from this school went to High School until much later. The first of the standard three levers was Stephen Mambon who was sent to Dregerhafen, near Finschhafen before enrolling at Bugandi.[7] Standard six School leavers from the school reached High School for the first time in 1969. These students enrolled at Bugandi, Busu and Bumayong High Schools in Lae before Kaiapit High School was set up in the Markham Valley in early 1970's. As a result not many students from the area have gone for further studies. The first student from Wantoat enrolled at University of Papua New Guinea was in 1974; few others have followed him. Up to now only four have graduated from University of Papua New Guinea. One is a private medical practitioner in Lae, the other is an accountant and I am the only postgraduate teaching Library study at University of Papua New Guinea.

4. The Present Schools in Leron-Wantoat.

There are ten community schools in Leron-Wantoat. Appendix One shows the names of schools, level, number of teachers and students and distance from the road. Five of them (Nariawan, Leron, Bumbum, Schniffner and Wandot) are directly along Leron-Wantoat road, two of them (Bukawe and Daum) are within walking distance and three of them (Bayamasu, Zuiebak and Natona) are out of reach from the road. A map showing the location of schools and proposed schools is also attached.

Wandot Community School is the largest with a total of 14 teachers and 508 students serving the population of central Wantoat valley. There are now plans for top-up next year with grades 7 and 8 being introduced in 2001. Another Community school and a High School have been proposed and may be built in the near future. This is the reason why a major library network is

[7] I presented Mambon's life story in *Times of PNG* and another paper presented at a PIPSA conference at Monash University in 1991. (Reference to both papers are listed in the bibliography)

needed for the District. In the long run five schools along the road will benefit from a planned mobile library service.

5. The Library Proposal

In 1999 I wrote up a proposal and took it to Wantoat to discuss it with schoolteachers. It was fortunate that I attended the school graduation as a guest of honor presenting school certificates. This gave me the opportunity to spell out the proposal to both teachers and parents.

The proposal gives a detailed study of the area, giving historical background, the number of schools in the area and the projected schools. The geography of the area was also included, as well as the road network, which in light of the proposal was very important.

While drawing up the proposal I had discussions with several embassies in Port Moresby, who indicated that they were willing to provide assistance for small projects. The school libraries were of interest to embassies and that assistance was possible.

The PNG National library was also approached to gauge their views on possible assistance. The School Library Service also agreed to provide training for teachers and to provide assistance through the school library book subsidy scheme.

6. Justification for a Library.

Schooling and education does not only takes place in a classroom but reading materials are needed to supplement teaching as well as improve general knowledge of future leaders. Libraries must be seen as a means to create and disseminate information to those who need it.

A school cannot operate without a library and that it is generally accepted that a good library will produce knowledgeable students who in tend will help inform the population. In the long run books will and should serve as a means to continue education and encourage further reading. It is my view that a good student starts reading and does independent research at an early age. Thus, a library will provide the necessities for a future `overall student' who will not only learn from classrooms, but by reading in his/her own time.

The project if supported will not only serve Wandot Community School, but other schools along Leron Wantoat road. A mobile library service is envisaged to serve other schools along the road. The Wandot Community School library will become a central location, which we hope will also become part of the cultural/resource center for the District. A cultural resource center is needed as traditional beliefs and knowledge is slowly dying as elders are passing away. The recorded information about the area will have to be deposited in this library as well. This may include published materials, and any other type of media that the library may want to collect in future.

7. Community Resource Center.

The lack of historical documents on Wantoat led to a proposal to set up a cultural and historical research collection as part of this library. I have been researching history of Wantoat and have failed to identify many sources on history of Wantoat. In fact the view is if this project was to get off the ground, it can become a cultural resource center that will not only serve students with books, but also become a Wantoat historical preservation and storage center.

Any materials written about the District will be stored here in future. Being a cultural center artifacts and or objects of historical value will be preserved in this building. It can be in tapes, videos, or any other formats. In particular we are also concerned with oral traditions; dances and other information sources of the people have been slowly dying as a result of older generation passing away. An oral history program can be started with this project in future. I have research

interest in this area, and Wandot Community School Library can become a repository for further research work. My own manuscripts, plus few other publications identified during research will lay the foundation for all materials on Wantoat in a section of the library. Research papers and thesis written by researchers in the past will also be deposited in this library.

8. Wandot Community School Project.

Since the start of Wandot Community School in 1956 no proper school library has been set up and there is none up to this day. I was thinking of setting up a project for the school, which laid the foundation for his future education. But the idea of setting up a library was instigated by Headmaster, (Mr. Andrew Gena) Chairman of Board of Management (Mr. Zangua) and Chairman of Parents and Citizens (Mr. Yuwia).[8] In the meantime I was also informed that Mr. Tayo Dau, Headmaster of Schiffner Primary School has plans for a double classroom for his school. As a result of this the proposal was changed to include a double classroom for Schiffner Community School.

The first stage of the project is envisaged to last at least three - four years, launching it in 1999. (1999-2002) and may extend depending on results of the first phase and needs that may arise.

For the school library, the first phase will have to go in two stages, stage one is to set up a temporary facility pending approval and funding for a permanent building. As the project advances the Library Management Board will do the review and monitoring. The board was installed at the Second general meeting in January 2000. Appendix three shows and names and titles of the ten-member board.

9. Planned Stages of Development

We anticipate a good and long-term project for the benefit of the people as well as the school. It therefore, will mean development of a library service at stages and a continuos review of operations to be made. Below is a short but brief summary of what will be done if and when the school library project starts.

It is envisaged that if funding and support comes in line with this proposal the school library project will take two steps and continual review of progress and problems that may arise. The first easy and simple one seems to be help from National Library. The National Library has been running a Kina-for-Kina subsidy scheme for all schools around the country. If we come up with some money they can top it up and buy books for the school. I for example delivered K100.00 worth of books bought from the National Library last December.

The present Wantoat School has a small library collection and will be used and expanded this year. Local expertise will be used to rebuild the shelves and other relevant renovation that may be required.

The next step will involve designing and building a permanent school library. This will cost money and fund raising will be needed to ensure that this project gets off the ground. We will have to raise funds and use the money to raise more within Wantoat.

Materials will be expensive, but there are possible donors who can supply materials for the school library. The Board will be prepared to raise funds within Wantoat as well. As soon as a permanent building is built, it will reduce the financial burden the project may face in future. This grants–in-aid proposal is being submitted to embassies that have indicated they will consider proposals for such projects.

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[8] A copy of the letter is with the author.

Personnel to manage the library will have to be trained. National Library School Advisory Service will help in this regard. This should not only be for teachers, but a local Wantoat has to be trained who will look after the library and be paid a wage in future.

Conclusion.

Despite the isolation of rural communities in this country proposals for similar projects can be drawn up. There are many rural community schools that do not have libraries, which can be used to serve the students to develop their reading skills.

Where there is a road network and several schools along the road a system can be arrange for continual movement of books from school to school allowing for a mobile service.

The proposed library service for Wantoat will serve many schools and we also have plans for a cultural/historical research collection of materials about the area. It is hoped that a Wantoat cultural center will develop as a result in future.

Rather than waiting for assistance from government local initiatives should be encouraged especially if there are ways and means of soliciting funds and materials for small projects in rural areas of the country.

I have personally learnt from this experience and I am of the view that other communities in the country can benefit form similar project plans and activities if they are prepared to commit themselves to such projects. The schools that have been without libraries can be supported and villagers and teachers plus good support from leaders and educated people can come up with good proposals.

As I have shown in this case study if good proposals are drawn up the donor agencies and embassies are sure to support. It has to be detailed outlining the current problems, justification for the project and plans for management if the project is approved and funded. Many organizations in the country have not been able to so do as a result of lack of ability and understanding to seek alternative support rather than waiting for government support.

Further to this had been the fact that this project has shown me the need for coordination and sharing of resources in a developing country that often lack the facilities and means to provide service to rural community. This small library project, for example would not have been possible without help from the Schools board of management, the University of Papua New Guinea, the National Library and the donor agencies. These all worked together to see the results, and it has also shown that there is a need for initiatives and commitment to such projects, because if one fails to help then it is often difficult to start such projects.

Postscript (Activities Between 2000 and 2001).

A report of activities of the year has been given to parents and citizens during last vacation period. (December –January 2000-2001). In brief a short summary is presented in this part of the paper as a postscript. Before writing the proposal I rang around most of the embassies to find out if they had programs for assisting small projects. Thos who agreed sent me application forms and gave me some guidelines in writing the project proposal. By February 2000 a proposal was written and submitted to all embassies in the capital Port Moresby. Some embassies have application forms for small activity schemes and these were sent to me to fill in and submit.

This process took longer than expected, as I did had to need quotes to all the items including books, buildings and other library materials. In total we put in a proposal and quotes for a figure up to K123, 000.00 (US$ 10,000.00) and submitted it with the application forms. In March 2000

the British High Commission responded to our request by giving us K5, 000.00 (US$2000) of which was used to buy books from a local book dealer. The donation was acknowledged and press releases were made to thank the British Embassy for the donation.

The other embassies have told us to put in a new submission for the next year and I have been doing this again this year. The responses we are waiting. In the meantime the books bought using the British Embassy Money was delivered to the Wandot Community school in May 2001 amidst big celebrations and excited parents and teachers. The newspapers and press were invited to he occasion and report in local media.

Late last year I went back to the area and officially close two schools for the term holidays and announced to launch two more school libraries in the area and encouraged parents to help raise funds. I have told the parents that we can not wait for the embassies only but must be seen to raise funds ourselves as well. At the time of writing this paper the parents and boards of management of these two schools have been raising funds and we hope to buy more books for these tow schools before the end of this year.

We are planning to conduct a workshop this year for teachers of all the schools and other local people who may want to learn the basic skills of maintaining and managing a library. The workshop has been agreed to and the PNG National Library through the school Library advisory section will help conduct the workshop.

As a token of our appreciation the people of the area asked me to invite the British High Commissioner to officiate at the opening of the school library in August this year. I am glad to report that the British High Commission has accepted the invitation and will open the library on August 1st this year.

Appendix One.

There are now ten (10) Community Schools in the area. The table below shows name of schools, level, number of staff, number of students, distance from Leron Wantoat road.

School Level Staff Students Distance (from road)

****WANDOT514508 0KM

*BAYAMASU34200 40KM

***SCHNIFFER3 4225 1KM

***BUMBUM35250 1KM

**BUKAWE23150 6KM

**DAUM34200 7KM

*ZUEIBAK34240 15KM

***LERON34200 1KM

*NATONA34208 13KM

***NARIAWAN34180 1KM

****Wandot Community School will be the base for the school library /cultural center, and the central location for a mobile library

*** The schools that can directly be served by a mobile library services if the facility is set up.

** These schools could/may also benefit from a mobile library service.

* Unfortunately, Bayamasu, Zueibak and Natona Community Schools are miles away from the road and will not benefit from the proposed school mobile library service.

Appendix Two. Budget Estimate. (Rough only) The rate: K1.00=US30cents. Temporary Library.

1. 1.1. Mobile shelf with books K2, 000.00
2. 1.2.Kina-for Kina subsidyK1, 000.00
2. Permanent Library

2.1. BuildingK10, 000.00

2.2. BookshelvesK2, 000.00

2.3.Books (reference books)K1, 000.00

2.4. Transport hire/costK1, 000.00

2.5. Staff (not a salary)K1, 000.00

Grand Total (for initial two stages) K18, 000.00

There is bound to be long-term financial problems and issues. Thus the Library Board will ensure that if there was more proposals attempts will be made to ensure that this project is a continual one.

Appendix Three: Management Team.

The small library collection just starting will need proper management and planning. It was therefore felt that the meeting nominate people for this management team. Thus, the following are members of this board.

1. Mr Kaima (Adviser)
2. The Headmaster, Mr Andrew Gena
3. District Manager, Mr. Daniel Wasinak
4. Teachers Representative (to be nominated)

5. Parent and citizens Mr Eli Akon
6. Board of Management (Chairman, Mr. Levi Zangua)
7. Mr Bingmalu Yuwia-the Council Representative
8. Mr Tayo Dau, the headmaster, Schiffner Com. School
9. Mr Keputung Balang, Headmaster, Bayamasu School
10. Bumbum Primary School (Representative to be nominated)

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